



## **TERRORISM Information**

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## **Terrorism**

In the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup> we have been left with the reality that disaster preparedness must now refer not only to natural disasters, but to man-made ones as well. Part of being prepared for a crisis is learning to identify the various types of possible terrorist attacks and the appropriate actions to take to ensure your safety. Terrorists seek to exploit our fear and anxiety, to capitalize on our insecurities and attempt to weaken our resolve. Yet we are not unequipped to meet this challenge; by making ourselves informed we strike a crushing blow to terrorists and inhibit their ability to use fear and uncertainty as weapons. Nevadans must be aware that knowing what to do in the event of an attack is an essential part of being prepared and may make all the difference in a time of crisis when seconds count.

**Biological Threat**

**Chemical Threats**

**Explosions**

**Nuclear Blasts**

**Radiation**

## Biological Threat

### Overview:

A biological attack is the deliberate release of germs or other biological substances that can cause illness and disease. Many of these agents must be inhaled, enter through a cut in the skin, or be ingested. Some biological agents, such as anthrax, do not produce contagious disease; others, such as the smallpox virus, can result in highly infectious diseases that are easily transmitted from person to person.

### In the event of a Biological Threat

Unlike an explosion, a biological attack may not be immediately obvious. Most likely reports of the attack will stem from a pattern of unusual illness or a large influx of affected people seeking medical attention. It is most likely that in the event of an attack the best sources for information will be emergency radio and television broadcasts although the possibility exists that you may be contacted by telephone or visited by emergency response workers. In the event of a biological attack, public health officials may not immediately be able to provide you with information. It will take time to determine exactly what biological agent has been used, how it should be treated, and the extent of the exposure. In the event of an attack, monitor the news outlets (i.e. TV, radio, Internet) for the following information:

- Are you in the group or area the authorities consider to be in danger?
- What are the signs and symptoms of the biological agent used?
- Are medications or vaccines being distributed?
- If so, where? Who should get them?
- Where should you seek emergency medical care if you become sick?

### During a declared biological emergency:

- If you or a family member becomes sick, **be suspicious**.
- **Do not assume**, however, that you should go to the hospital emergency room, or that the symptoms are necessarily the result of the biological agent. The symptoms of many common illnesses may overlap so **do not rush to conclusions**.
- Use common sense, practice good hygiene and cleanliness to **avoid spreading germs** and **seek medical advice**.
- Consider if you are in the exposed group or area.
- **If your symptoms match** those described and you are in the group considered **at risk**, immediately seek **emergency medical attention**.

### If you are potentially exposed:

- Follow instructions of doctors and other public health officials.
- If the disease is **contagious** expect to receive **medical evaluation and treatment**. You may be advised to stay away from others or even deliberately **quarantined**.
- For **non-contagious diseases**, expect to receive **medical evaluation and treatment**.

### If you become aware of an unusual or suspicious substance nearby:

- **Quickly get away**.
- **Protect yourself. Cover your mouth and nose** with layers of dense-weave cotton material that can filter the air but still allow breathing. Examples include two to three layers of cotton such as a T-shirt, handkerchief or towel. Otherwise, several layers of tissue or paper towels may help.

- **Wash** with soap and water.
- **Contact authorities.**
- Watch TV, listen to radio, or check the Internet for **official news and information.**
- **If you become sick, seek emergency medical attention.**

## Chemical Threat

### Overview:

A chemical attack is the deliberate release of a toxic gas, liquid, or solid that can poison people and the environment. Possible signs of a chemical attack are:

- Many people suffering from watery eyes, twitching, choking, having trouble breathing or losing coordination.
- Many sick or dead birds, fish, or other small animals are also a cause for suspicion.

### If you observe signs of a chemical attack: Find clean air quickly

- Immediately try to **define the impacted area** or where the chemical is coming from, if possible.
- Take **immediate action to get away**.
- If the chemical is inside a building where you are, **evacuate the building immediately** without passing through the contaminated area, if possible.
- If you are unable to evacuate the building or find clean air without passing through the contaminated area, it may be better to move as far away as possible and “shelter-in-place.”
- If you are outside, quickly decide what is the fastest way to find clean, uncontaminated air. Consider if you can evacuate the area or if you should go inside a nearby building and “shelter-in-place.”

### If you think you have been exposed to a chemical

If your eyes are watering, your skin is stinging, and you are having trouble breathing, you may have been exposed to a chemical.

- If you think you may have been **exposed to a chemical, strip immediately and wash**.
- Look for a hose, fountain, or any source of **water**, and **wash with soap** if possible, being sure not to scrub the chemical into your skin.
- Seek **emergency medical attention**.

## Explosion

### If there is an explosion:

- **Take shelter** against your desk or a sturdy table.
- **Exit** the building ASAP.
- **Do not** use the elevators.
- **Check for fire** and other hazards.
- **Take your emergency supply kit**, if time allows.

### If there is a Fire

- **Exit** the building ASAP
- **Crawl** low if there is smoke
- Use a wet cloth, if possible, to **cover** your nose and mouth.
- Use the back of your hand to **feel** the upper, lower, and middle parts of closed doors.
- If the door **is not hot**, brace yourself against it and open slowly.
- If the door **is hot**, do not open it and look for an alternate way out.
- **Do not use elevators.**
- If you should catch fire, do not run. **Stop-drop-and-roll** to put out the fire.
- If you are at home, go to a previously designated meeting place.
- Account for your family members and carefully supervise small children.
- **Never go back into a burning building.**

### If you are trapped by debris

- If possible, use a flashlight to signal your location to rescuers.
- **Avoid unnecessary movements** so that you don't kick up dust.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with anything you have on hand. Any dense-weave cotton material can act as a good filter to breathe through.
- **Tap on a pipe or wall** so that rescuers can hear where you are.
- If possible, use a whistle to signal rescuers.
- Shout **only as a last resort**, as shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

# Nuclear Blast

## Overview:

A nuclear blast is an explosion with intense light and heat, a damaging pressure wave, and widespread radioactive material that can contaminate the air, water, and ground surface for miles around. **In the event of a nuclear incident, it is imperative to avoid radioactive material, if possible.** While security experts predict that at this time a nuclear attack is less likely than any of the other types, terrorism by its nature is unpredictable.

## In the event of a nuclear attack:

- *If there is advanced warning of an attack:* **Take cover** immediately, as far below ground as possible, though any shield or shelter will help protect you from the immediate effects of the blast and pressure wave.
- *If there is no warning:*
  1. Quickly assess the situation.
  2. Consider if evacuation is possible or if going into a building to “shelter-in-place” is the better way to limit the amount of radioactive material you are exposed to.
  3. If you do take shelter, go as far below ground as possible, close windows and doors, turn off air conditioners, heaters, and other ventilation systems. Stay where you are, watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for official news as it becomes available.
  4. To limit the amount of radiation you are exposed to, think about **shielding, distance and time**.
    - **Shielding:** If you have a thick shield between yourself and the radioactive materials more of the harmful radiation will be absorbed and you will be exposed to less.
    - **Distance:** The farther away you are from the blasts epicenter and the fallout the lower your exposure to harmful radiation.
    - **Time:** Minimizing the time spent exposed to the radiation will also reduce your risk or serious side effects.

Make use of all available information to assess the situation. If there is a significant radiation threat, health care authorities may advise you to take **potassium iodide**. Potassium iodide is the same substance added to table salt to iodize it. It may protect your thyroid gland, which is particularly vulnerable to damage from radiation, from radioactive iodine exposure. **Consider keeping potassium iodide in your emergency kit;** learn what the appropriate doses are for each of your family members. Plan to speak to your health care provider in advance about what course of action makes the most sense for your family.

## Radiation

A radiation threat, commonly referred to as a “dirty bomb” or “radiological dispersion device (RDD),” is the use of common explosive devices to spread radioactive materials over a targeted area. In contrast to a nuclear blast, the force of the explosion and radioactive contamination will be more localized. While the initial explosion will be easily identified, the presence of radiation will not be clearly defined until trained personnel are able to use specialized equipment to monitor the explosion area. As with any radiation, the best policy is to try to **limit exposure**. It is also important to avoid inhaling the radioactive dust that may be released into the air.

### In the event of a radiation threat or “dirty bomb”

As with all radiation, to limit your exposure think about **shielding, distance, and time**.

- **Shielding:** If you have a thick shield between yourself and the radioactive materials more of the harmful radiation will be absorbed and you will be exposed to less.
  - **Distance:** The farther away you are from the blast's epicenter and the fallout the lower your exposure to harmful radiation.
  - **Time:** Minimizing the time spent exposed to the radiation will also reduce your risk or serious side effects.
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- **If you are outside** and witness or are warned by authorities about a radiation-releasing explosion, cover your nose and mouth and quickly go inside an undamaged building. If you are already inside a building, ensure that it is free of damage and then remain where you are.
  - Close windows and doors; turn off air conditioners, heaters and other ventilation systems
  - **If you are inside** and there is an explosion near where you are or you are warned of a radiation release inside, cover nose and mouth and go outside immediately. Look for a building or other shelter that has not been damaged and quickly get inside. Once inside, close all doors and windows; turn off air conditioners, heaters and other ventilation systems.
  - If you think you have been exposed to radiation, take off your clothes and wash as soon as possible.
  - Stay where you are, watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for official news as it becomes available.